

# To the Chairman & Members of the Dawlish Urban District Council.

## Report of Medical Officer of Health

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERS.**—The town lies on the floor and slopes of a picturesque ravine, running from Haldon in an easterly direction to the sea. The central part of the valley is occupied by extensive gardens, through which runs the stream known as Dawlish Water. The District, which has a total area of 1500 acres, includes the village of Holcombe, pleasantly situated on the cliffs about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the south.

**THE POPULATION** at the last census was 4,100, but the figures now supplied by the Registrar General are 4,257 for calculating the Death Rates, and 4,435 for the Birth Rates.

**OCCUPATION.**—With the exception of a Brewery there are no local industries, but employment is provided in catering for the large and increasing number of visitors who frequent the town. There is also a small sea-faring population.

**RATEABLE VALUE.**—On agricultural land, £2,156; on buildings, £22,511; total, £24,667.

**BALANCE OF LOANS OUTSTANDING.**—£13,524 3s. 1d., of which £6,213 is on account of water supply. £3206 14s. 8d. for sewerage, and £316 5s. for public conveniences.

**OUTDOOR RELIEF** in 1919 amounted to £311 10s., or rather over 1s. 5d. per head of the population, as compared with 1s. 3d. in 1918.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**—The number of deaths registered in the District was 75, but to these must be added 7 which took place at the Union House with 2 others "transferable." Seven which occurred in visitors (including 2 in the Cottage Hospital) are deducted. This gives a nett total of 77 (36 in males and 41 in females), equal to a general rate of 18.1 per 1,000 as compared with 14.9 in 1918 and a decennial average of 14.8. The deaths in the four quarters of the year numbered 26, 14, 13 and 24, giving rates per 1,000 per annum of 24.4, 12.2, 13.2, and 22.5 respectively. Thus the first and last quarters shewed far the highest mortality.

The percentage of deaths under one year to the total was 5.2, and of those over 65, 53.2: the average age at death worked out at 58.8 years. The figures for the previous year were 3.6, 55.4 and 62.2 respectively.

**THE INFANTILE MORTALITY**, or deaths under one year to 1,000 births, was 67, as against 42 in 1918 and an average of 63 for the preceding decade. The causes of infant deaths were—Respiratory diseases, 2; debility and accident, 1 each.

The births of 28 boys and 32 girls give an annual rate of 13.5 per 1,000. This is about midway between the low figure of 1918 (11.4) and the decennial average of 15.9. Sixteen births were registered in the first quarter, 17 in the second, 12 in the third, and 15 in the fourth, giving rates per 1,000 per annum of 14.4, 15.3, 10.8, and 13.5 respectively.

Thus the deaths again out-number the births and there is a natural decrease of 17, or 4 per 1,000. The General Death Rate is somewhat high; on the other hand there were no zymotic fatalities and the infant mortality continues at a low figure. The proportion of senile deaths was large, and the average age at death reached nearly 60 years. On the whole the year was a healthy one.

Turning to the chief causes of fatality, tubercular disease was responsible for 3 deaths (2 from phthisis, equal to a rate of .5 per 1,000); this is well below the normal. Cancer, however, with 6 deaths and a rate of 1.4 is somewhat above the average. Mortality from respiratory (12) and circulatory diseases (20) has greatly increased; these constitute a large proportion of the total deaths; that from violence (4) is also in excess of the mean.

**ZYMOTIC DISEASE.**—For the fourth year in succession there were no deaths from any of the seven ordinary zymotic diseases, and the rate therefore is nil. The mean for the preceding ten years works out at .77 per 1,000.

Notifications of infectious disease were 32 in number. They included 7 scarlet fever, 2 diphtheria, 2 erysipelas, 4 malaria, 8 tuberculosis, and 9 measles and german measles.

**MEASLES.**—Three cases were reported during the year—two in children (both visitors) and the other in an adult (age 28).

**GERMAN MEASLES** was responsible for six notifications—2 in visitors. Four of these patients were infants under 3; one only attended the Council Schools, while one was an adult.

All these measles cases were spread over the months April—September.

**DIPHTHERIA** was limited to two attacks. The first (November) was in a child of 4 (a visitor, who was immediately taken home). The other patient was an adult of 45 (at the end of December); this case was removed to the Exeter Sanatorium.

**SCARLET FEVER.**—Seven cases; two were reported in March, but without association; one was obviously contracted outside the District. November was responsible for three more, all in school children; two were brothers and the other intimately associated. I examined all the children in the class affected, and later on the whole Infants' School, but without result. In December, however, there were two more attacks—one of these children attended the Infants' School, while the other (age 8) was at a private school.

Of the total, 6 were children under 10 years of age, while the other was an adult (age 45). Two were removed to the Exeter Sanatorium, one to Newton Isolation Hospital, while four were sufficiently isolated at home. In one of the latter cases, however, Hospital treatment was not available owing to pressure of patients, and on my advice the other children—5 in number—were boarded out with a relative till the house was free from infection. This measure was successful, and no other member of the family was attacked.

**MALARIA.**—Four notifications, all in young adults lately demobilised from service in tropical countries. In one of these cases there was difficulty in getting the patient quinine, but this was eventually supplied by the Council till the matter was settled.

**PHTHISIS.**—Seven cases were reported. Four were in visitors, of whom two have since died and two left the district. Of the residents, one was a school boy (age 9) and the others between 25 to 30 years; one was invalided out of the Army. Influenza and pleurisy were said to be the starting point of disease in two instances. All had separate bedrooms, but in one case the sanitation was indifferent and the house damp; the owner is under notice to remedy this.

One notification of other tubercular disease was received in a young child, the mesenteric glands being affected.

**DIARRHOEA.**—There were no deaths from this cause, and the disease was not at any time prevalent.

**INFLUENZA** again appeared but to a more limited extent and in a milder form—in the early spring months. There were, however, only two fatalities. I did not consider it necessary to close the schools, which were but little affected.

**ISOLATION HOSPITAL.**—Three patients were sent to the Exeter Sanatorium (2 scarlet fever, 1 diphtheria), and one (scarlet fever) to the Newton Isolation Hospital during the year.

**GENERAL HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.**—There is a Cottage Hospital containing two small wards of four beds each and a cot, also two private wards. There is a dispensary in connection with this.

**SMALL POX.**—The question of accommodation for patients has not yet been solved. Negotiations with the Exeter City Authorities unfortunately fell through. Forty-six vaccinations were registered in 1919.

**MIDWIVES ACT** is administered by the County Council. The part-time services of a Health Visitor (Miss Ellis) are available.

**SALE OF FOODS AND DRUGS ACT** is administered by the Police. The following samples were taken for analysis:—Milk (new), 6d.; Margarine, 2d. All but one (milk) were found to be genuine and up to the standard. There were no prosecutions.

**WATER SUPPLY.**—Only a small reduction in the service at night is now required and the water maintains its usual excellent quality—the analyst (Mr. Tickle) reports as follows:—"The organic purity of the supply is very satisfactory and the favorable quality of the water continues constant and free from interference by climatic conditions."

**SEWERAGE SYSTEM.**—Remains in good working order; no streams are polluted in this District. Water closets are general and practically all are flushed.

**SCAVENGING.**—House refuse is removed three times a week in the town and once or twice in the outskirts (by the Council's Employees). I have had no complaints during the past year.

**SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.**—Four in the town and one just outside have been frequently visited by Mr. Churchward and myself. One of these has been the subject of some complaint of nuisance arising from the boiling of offal, and the question of a Public Abattoir has been mooted. No definite steps have however yet been taken in the matter.

**DAIRIES, COWSHEDS & MILKSHOPS.**—There are 13 Milk-sellers 7 of whom are cow-keepers. These are regularly visited (at least twice a year) and were generally found in good order. In one instance, however, the yard and slippens require some attention as to drainage, and the owner is under notice to carry this work out.

**HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.**—Schemes have been approved in connection with the new building scheme and plans of 12 houses at Oakhill have been passed and tenders asked for. It is proposed to put up 50 dwellings in all.

A considerable number of the older dwellings are below the standard of fitness for habitation, either owing to their general condition or want of air-space. In some cases their removal as obstructive buildings would greatly improve neighbouring dwellings, but nothing can be done in this direction until the new houses are an accomplished fact. There is but little overcrowding, which again could not be dealt with under present conditions. No proceedings were taken under this heading during the year, nor were any houses condemned.

At the last census there were 1,066 inhabited houses (3.8 persons per house).

**FACTORIES & WORKSHOPS ACT.**—The following 42 workshops have been inspected and found satisfactory:—

Bakers	...	7	Plumber	...	1
Bootmaker	...	1	Power Stations	...	2
Builders	...	8	Printers	...	2
Dressmakers	...	7	Smiths	...	2
Laundries	...	9	Tailors	...	3

Adoptive Acts and Regulations in force in the District.

Public Health Amendment Act 1890.  
Infectious Diseases Prevention Act 1890.  
Public Health Amendment Act 1907.

Model Building Bye-laws.  
Pleasure Grounds Regulations.  
Regulations under Dairies, etc., Order 1899.  
Common Lodging House Regulations.  
Model Slaughter House Regulations.  
Boating and Bathing Regulations.

H. B. MAPLETON, M.D.,  
Medical Officer of Health.

April 16th, 1920.

## Report of Mr. S. F. C. CHURCHWARD, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

Dairies inspected	...	...	...	8
Cowsheds	...	...	...	8
Milkshops	...	...	...	6
Bakehouses	...	...	...	7
Slaughterhouses inspected	...	...	...	6
Laundries	...	...	...	11
Workshops	...	...	...	31
Intimations now served	...	...	...	12
Houses disinfected	...	...	...	16
Houses redrained	...	...	...	3
Total number of water and smoke tests	...	...	...	16
Total number of visits	...	...	...	139
Number of loads of scavenge collected	...	...	...	2116

The slaughter houses, dairies, milkshops, cowsheds, bakehouses, laundries, workshops and conveniences at Railway Station have been regularly inspected. 224 lbs. of frozen meat has been condemned as unfit for food.

## METEOROLOGICAL STATISTICS.

	Max. and Min. mean shade temp.	Barometric pressure mean of month	Rainfall at the Lown	Wet days	Hours of Sunshine	Sunless days
January	... 43.0	29.34	5.20	23	76.60	9
February	... 38.0	29.36	5.86	13	42.25	18
March	... 41.5	29.47	4.07	14	130.40	9
April	... 46.5	29.65	1.63	11	209.65	1
May	... 59.5	29.40	1.04	4	220.00	2
June	... 57.5	29.84	0.85	5	268.75	2
July	... 59.5	29.82	1.59	7	231.50	—
August	... 59.0	29.77	2.95	10	283.25	1
September	... 57.0	29.72	1.79	8	163.75	5
October	... 49.0	29.83	1.52	10	189.25	2
November	... 42.0	29.09	2.59	15	88.00	10
December	... 47.5	29.41	5.65	23	47.50	20

Highest shade temperature	...	79
Lowest shade temperature	...	24
Mean maximum temperature	...	56
Mean minimum temperature	...	44
Mean range of temperature	...	12
Total Rainfall	...	34.74
Wet days	...	143
Total hours of Sunshine	...	1950.90
Sunless Days	...	79

Wind Directions:—N., 6; N.E., 48; E., 18; S.E., 60; N.N.W., 26; N.N.E., 9; S., 11; S.W., 61; W., 6; N.W., 84; S.S.E., 30; S.S.W., 6.

S. F. C. CHURCHWARD,  
Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

